(d) the total amount proposed to be spent on construction of rail routes in Sikkim State during the said Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Taking up work of new lines is an ongoing process based on justification and demands as per criteria prescribed by National Transport Policy Committee (1980). No Plan has been finalized separately for the Eleventh Five Year Plan.

(c) and (d) It is proposed to complete 2,000 kms of new lines out of ongoing new line projects during the Eleventh Five Year Plan period. No project is sanctioned in Sikkim State However, a proposal for new line from Sivok to Rangpo (52.70 kms) at an estimated cost of about Rs. 1300 crore has been processed and sent to Planning Commission for 'in principle' approval. The work would be taken up as and when requisite clearances are obtained from the competent authority.

Public-private investment in modernisation of Railways in Tamil Nadu

1695. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Railways alongwith private sector have planned to invest in the railway modernisation besides other projects during Eleventh Plan period;

(b) if so, the concrete programme of action plan prepared by the Railways;

(c) the amount likely to be invested for the projects in Tamil Nadu;

(d) whether all pending proposals of the State of Tamil Nadu would be undertaken; and

(e) if so, the time by when the amount in respect of Tamil Nadu likely to be released?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The projected requirement of funds for investment in Railways plan for Eleventh Five Year Plan including investment through Public-Private Partnership is Rs. 2,51,000 Crores.

(b) The areas which have been identified for possible execution through Public-Private Partnership include commercial development of land, development of passenger/freight terminals, container services, loco and wagon manufacturing, logiestics parks and budget hotels.

(c) Taking into account new projects proposed in Budget 2008-09, the projects in Tamil Nadu entail about Rs. 6500 Crores for completion.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Sanctioned projects are being progressed as per availability of resources and funds allocated in the Budget.

Promotion of Punjabi language in Railways

1696. SHRI TARLOCHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the languages being used on all railways platform on all railways stations located in Haryana;

(b) whether he is aware that Punjabi language is the major language after Hindi in the State;

(c) why Punjabi language has been ignored by the Railways on all the sign boards on railways stations; and

(d) whether government would remove this injustice to the minority language in Haryana State as regards Railways is concerned?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (d) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Negligent duty by railway driver

†1697. SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:
SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the driver of the train starting from Jagadhri and terminating to Delhi went away after leaving the train at Khekra station on 14th December, 2007 owing to completion of his duty-time;

(b) whether it is also a fact that this treatment of the driver caused extreme difficulties to the passengers;

(c) the period of time after which another driver was arranged by the Railways; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to prevent the reoccurrence of such incident in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. No difficulty was faced by the passengerss as this was not a scheduled passenger carrying train. This was rake of empty passenger coaches.

(c) Another driver was arranged on the same day within 8 hours.

(d) Generally, detention does not occur to passenger carrying trains on account of non-availability of crews. Due care is taken to ensure that the trains runs are completed within the stipulated duty period of the driver, Stoppage to freight trains may sometimes take place, but his is well planned and deemed action is taken, as required depending on the availability of crew and the priority of the train.

Need of price regulatory mechanism

1698. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD:
SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian domestic steel producers have recently hiked the prices of steel citing prevailing global trends in steel prices;

(b) the details of the increase of prices by the steel producers during the last three years and the total percentage of such increase;

(c) whether Government has taken this issue seriously and propose to rein the steel industry through a price regulatory mechanism; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.